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U.S. intelligence agencies resorted to simplistic, over-estimates in an effort to bolster support for Reagan administration Central America, a House committee staff said in a sharply released Wednesday.

The Intelligence Committee staff report focused on several intelligence estimates and briefings dealing with Nicaragua's military buildup, outside support for guerrillas in El Salvador and a crackdown against the Miskito Indians by Nicaragua's Marxist regime.

"Taken as a whole, intelligence on Central America is strong, and its task is both difficult and particularly important," the report said.

But it also spelled out "the costs of intelligence misuse," pointing to estimates produced by the CIA and other intelligence agencies "whose primary purpose appears less to inform policy choices than to help mobilize support for policy."

"This is not to say that these products are intended to convey falsehoods, or that they lack serious analysis. But the purpose of a product fundamentally affects its nature," the report said.

Such misuse of intelligence estimates to promote policy goals, it said, results in a loss of "precisely qualified judgments and rigorous evaluation of contradictory evidence."

Asked about the study, CIA spokesman Dale Peterson said, "We have no comment."

In issuing the study, Rep. Charles Rose, D-N.C., chairman of the panel's subcommittee on oversight and evaluation, said, "It is no secret that our committee labored mightily over the decision to release this staff report."

"Some members believed that we should circulate it only within the intelligence community, as a kind of in-house critique," he said. "Some felt the staff report was unfair in its criticisms. Some members shared the intelligence agencies' fear that public release would damage public confidence in intelligence."

Rose said his subcommittee staff has worked with the intelligence agencies "to ensure the accuracy and fairness of the report."

Also, he said, "I believe that public release of an unclassified report like this, that both praises and criticizes intelligence performance, will actually strengthen public confidence in intelligence and in the congressional oversight process."

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